



FREEBORN COUNTY
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Thursday, February 8th, 2024, at 1:30 pm

1. Call to Order

- The regular meeting of the Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) was called to order by Chairman Christopher Dahl at the district office located at 1400 West Main Street, Albert Lea, MN on Thursday, February 8th, 2024, at 1:30 pm.

Attendees

- In attendance: Christopher Dahl (Chairman), Curt Helland (Board Secretary), Vickie Heers (Supervisor), Brenda Lageson (District Manager)-Virtual, Chad Billat (Private Lands Biologist), Lindsey Zeitler (Resource Conservationist), Mark Trnka (Conservation Technician) Senja Viktora (District Technician).
- Absent: Donald Kropp (Vice-Chairman), David Ausen (Treasurer)

2. Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on January 11th, 2024, was made by Heers and seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Treasurer's Report

- Balance in checking account was \$7,706.56, savings \$1,210,844.73, and CD (10 month) \$250,000.00 as of January 31st, 2024. A motion to approve treasurer's report and payment of bills was made by Heers and seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- An audit engagement letter from the Peterson Company was discussed. A motion was made to accept the engagement letter and continue the use of Peterson Company for audit services by Helland, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Le Sueur River Watershed

- The board discussed the Le Sueur River Watershed One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) Fiscal Agent Sub-Agreement with Waseca SWCD. A motion to accept the Fiscal Agent Sub-Agreement with the Waseca SWCD for the Le Sueur River 1W1P plan was made by Helland, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

5. Steele County SWCD Easement Services

- The board discussed entering into an agreement with the Steele County SWCD for shared easement services from Billat. A motion was made to approve agreement and authorize Lageson to sign once received by Helland, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

6. Cost Share & Grant Items

- Billat presented to the board the Conservation Cooperative for Working Lands Grant, a one-year grant of \$30,000. A motion was made for Lageson to sign application for submittal by Heers, seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- NEW COST SHARE**
 - Billat presented to the board a request for cost share for a grassed waterway.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| WBIF-CW-FREE-22-06 | GRASSED WATERWAY | \$3,750.00 | \$3,750.00 | WBIF#C22-5721 |

A motion was made by Helland to approve this contract for funding, motion seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- Zeitler presented to the board a request for cover crop cost share.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|------------|-------------|
| FY23-SH-01 | COVER CROPS | \$5,400.00 | \$5,400.00 | P23-5773 |

A motion was made by Heers to approve this contract for funding, motion seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- Zeitler presented to the board a request for cost share for a well sealing.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| WBIF-CW-FREE-22-07 | WELL SEALING | \$1,500.00 | \$1,500.00 | WBIF#C22-5721 |

A motion was made by Helland to approve this contract for funding, motion seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

iv. Billat presented to the board a request for prairie strip cost share.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|-----------------|---------------|------------------|------------|-------------|
| FY-24-SW-CRP-01 | PRAIRIE STRIP | \$4,747.50 | \$4,747.50 | P24-0021 |

A motion was made by Heers to approve this contract for funding, motion seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

7. Day at the Capitol

- Discussion regarding the Legislative Day at the Capitol on March 12-13, 2024, in St. Paul, MN. A motion was made by Heers to approve two (2) staff and two (2) supervisors to attend the Legislative Day at the Capitol was seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

8. Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP)

- Request for funds for technical assistance and promotional funds for the MAWQCP program was brought before the board. A motion to request funds for technical assistance and promotion funds for the MAWQCP was made by Heers, seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

9. 2023 Annual Report/2024 Annual Plan

- Viktora presented to the board draft copies of the 2023 Annual Report and a 2024 Annual Plan. Minor adjustments need to be made to both. A motion to approve the 2023 Annual Report and 2024 Annual Plan after the adjustments are made was made by Heers, seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

10. NRCS Report

- Kurer provided a written report for the board, highlighted current staffing changes/news, and the status of the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), & Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

12. Supervisor Reports

- Helland reported attending the Technical Service Area (TSA) meeting on January 30th. Regular business was discussed and Helland was elected to the board as Vice President. Discussed replacement engineer and we offered our office as a possible location for the new engineering technician.
- Heers reported attending the Cedar/Wapsipicon 1W1P Policy Board Meeting. Regular business, Heers was elected Treasurer. Other items discussed were budget, updated cost-share policy.

13. Manager Report

- Manager report previously emailed to board members.
 - Lageson requested to attend a State Manager Meeting in Baxter, MN on 3/26 & 3/27. A motion to approve and reimburse allowable expenses was made by Helland and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

14. Staff Reports

- Staff reports previously emailed to board members.
 - Zeitler updated the board on a partnership with the City of Albert Lea and the Lions Club to obtain trees for 3rd graders.
 - Viktora updated the board on the Tree Open House that was held on January 30th.
 - Viktora also brought before the board a request to order name tags for staff and supervisors. A motion was made by Heers for staff to decide color and design of name tags and to order them, seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

15. Board Meeting Time

- A brief discussion was held regarding the time of the monthly board meetings and an 8:30 am time was brought for consideration. Will discuss next meeting when we have Ausen and Kropp’s input.

16. Adjournment

- There being no further business, adjournment was made by Helland and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

These are preliminary minutes subject to board approval at the next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors on March 14th, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Curt Helland, Board Secretary

Date